

June 8, 1965

Cable 364 from the US Embassy in Gabon to the Department of State

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Summary:

According to the Embassy, only President Leon M'ba, the Minister of the National Economy, and his predecessor would know of any diversion of any uranium from Gabon to Israel.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

~~INCO - URANIUM GABON~~

SECRET

49-S-82

Action
NEA

Control: 7114
Rec'd: June 8, 1965
11:04 a.m.

FROM: Libreville

Info

SS ACTION: Secstate 364

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SP DATE: June 8

SAH

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AF DEPTTEL 131

EUR

NSC

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*STR 12-3 ISR - MEN
INCO URANIUM GABON*

*Libreville 364
6-8-65*

It likely only two Gabonese officials, aside from President, would be informed any diversion uranium from normal French market. They are Minister National Economy and Mines Daniel Nua Ekamkam and his predecessor G.A. Anguile. I pointed out to Ekamkam that since Gabon had signed test-ban agreement it presumably will not facilitate effort of non-nuclear power violate this agreement. I also noted that this matter concerned African Continent because of Israel's proximity. Nevertheless, Ekamkam, who took office only ten weeks ago, claims he has not yet been able look into uranium affairs and advised me talk with Anguile. Latter has been out of country most of time since March ministerial changes and I have not been able arrange private conversation with him.

RSR

French officials of Compagnie de Franceville (COMUF), and French mining advisers to Gabonese Government who are normally quite cooperative, were not only evasive but in some cases hostile when I broached this subject. A top official of COMUF told me that in view of French-American differences over nuclear policy it not likely that any French Government official would divulge type information we seeking. He urged me not risk upsetting pleasant relationship by pursuing this matter indiscriminately.

Middle echelon officials here simply take position that entire output of Mounana mine goes to France under long-term contract. They say there little likelihood GOF would find it necessary

consult GOG

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-2- 364, June 8, from Libreville

consult GOG in event it wished divert small amount to Israel.

It possible G.A. Anguile will be willing throw a little light on this shadowy subject, but I doubt it. On important issues Anguile hews closely to French line unless he sees over-riding Gabonese interest in ignoring it.

Aside from direct security matters, uranium is most sensitive subject in Gabon. Unless by chance we come upon some informed French official who disagrees with his government's policy I see little chance obtaining information informally.

We might wish consider raising matter more formally, but still orally, with Foreign Minister and/or President. As Gabon has indicated concern over proliferation nuclear weapons through signature test-ban treaty I believe they would not reject our inquiry out-of-hand. In view Leon Mba's absolute dependence on Gaullists I believe he must cooperate with them on any matter they consider to be important. Therefore it quite likely he would simply reiterate theme we hear here to effect that all Gabonese uranium goes to France, but it not impossible there are some small diversions.

Suggest that best hope for obtaining information lies in covert channels.

GP-3.

COURTNEY

VLH

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